
Cadenus and Vanessa[†]

(1713?, 1726)

Written at Windsor, Anno 1713.

THE *Shepherds* and the *Nymphs* were seen
Pleading before the *Cyprian* Queen,¹
The Council for the Fair began,
Accusing that false Creature, *Man*:
The Brief with weighty Crimes was charg'd, 5
On which the Pleader much enlarg'd:
That *Cupid* now has lost his Art,
Or blunts the Point of ev'ry Dart;
His Altar now no longer smokes,
His Mother's Aid no Youth invokes: 10
This tempts Free-thinkers² to refine,
And bring in doubt their Pow'r divine.

Now Love is dwindled to Intrigue,
And Marriage grown a Money-League.
Which Crimes aforesaid, (*with her Leave*) 15
Were (*as he humbly did conceive*)
Against our Sov'reign Lady's Peace,
Against the Statute in that Case:
Against her Dignity and Crown.
Then pray'd an Answer, and sat down. 20

THE *Nymphs* with Scorn beheld their Foes;
When the Defendant's Council rose;
And, what no Lawyer ever lack'd,
With Impudence own'd all the Fact:
But, what the gentlest Heart would vex, 25
Laid all the Fault on t'other Sex.
That modern Love is no such Thing,
As what those antient Poets sing;
A Fire celestial, chaste, refin'd,

[†] Cadenus is an anagram of Decanus, Latin for Dean. Vanessa, now a popular name for girls, was invented by Swift, constructed from Esther Vanhomrigh: "Van" from Vanhomrigh and "essa" from Esther. Esther (or Hester) Vanhomrigh (1688–1723) was of Dutch descent. An intimate friend and correspondent of Swift, she followed him from London to Dublin. The poem is Swift's version of their relationship. The poem was not intended for publication. When manuscript copies of it embarrassingly began circulating in public, Swift described the poem as "onely a cavalier Business" and a "Private humorous thing" (CW II:639). Unauthorized editions were printed in 1726. It is Swift's longest poem.

1. The poem's setting is the Court of Love, presided over by Venus ("the *Cyprian* Queen"). Standard contemporary legal jargon is deployed throughout the poem.

2. Anticlerical and deistic rejecters of authority in matters of religious belief.

Conceiv'd and kindled in the Mind; 30
 Which, having found an equal Flame,
 Unites, and both become the same;
 In different Breasts together burn,
 Together both to Ashes turn.
 But Women now feel no such Fire; 35
 And only know the gross Desire:
 Their Passions move in lower Spheres,
 Where-e'er Caprice or Folly steers:
 A Dog, a Parrot, or an Ape,
 Or some worse Brute in human Shape, 40
 Engross the Fancies of the Fair,
 The few soft Moments they can spare,
 From Visits to receive and pay;
 From Scandal, Politicks, and Play;
 From Fans, and Flounces, and Brocades, 45
 From Equipage and Park-Parades;
 From all the Thousand Female Toys;³
 From every Trifle that employs
 The Out or Inside of their Heads,
 Between their Toylets⁴ and their Beds. 50

IN a dull Stream, which moving slow,
 You hardly see the Current flow;
 If a small Breeze obstructs the Course,
 It whirls about for want of Force;
 And in its narrow Circle gathers 55
 Nothing but Chaff, and Straws, and Feathers:
 The Current of a Female Mind
 Stops thus, and turns with ev'ry Wind;
 Thus whirling round, together draws
 Fools, Fops, and Rakes, for Chaff and Straws. 60
 Hence we conclude, no Women's Hearts
 Are won by Virtue, Wit, and Parts:
 Nor are the Men of Sense to blame,
 For Breasts incapable of Flame;
 The Fault must on the *Nymphs* be plac'd, 65
 Grown so corrupted in their Taste.

THE Pleader having spoke his best,
 Had Witness ready to attest;
 Who fairly could on Oath depose,
 When Questions on the Fact arose, 70
 That ev'ry Article was true;
Nor further those Deponents knew:
 Therefore he humbly would insist,
 The Bill might be with Costs dismiss.

3. Trifles.

4. Dressing tables.

THE Cause appear'd of so much Weight, 75
 That *Venus*, from her Judgment-Seat,
 Desir'd them not to talk so loud,
 Else she must interpose a Cloud:
 For if the Heav'nly Folk should know
 These Pleadings *in the Courts below*, 80
 That Mortals here disdain to love;
 She ne'er could shew her Face above:
 For Gods, their Betters, are too wise
 To value that which Men despise:
 And then, said she, my Son and I, 85
 Must strole in Air 'twixt Land and Sky;
 Or else, shut out from Heaven and Earth,
 Fly to the Sea, my Place of Birth;⁵
 There live with daggl'd *Mermaids* pent,
 And keep on Fish perpetual *Lent*. 90

BUT since the Case appear'd so nice,
 She thought it best to take Advice.
 The *Muses*, by their King's Permission,
 Tho' Foes to Love, attend the Session;
 And on the Right Hand took their Places 95
 In Order; on the Left, the *Graces*:
 To whom she might her Doubts propose
 On all Emergencies that rose.
 The *Muses* oft were seen to frown;
 The *Graces* half asham'd look down; 100
 And 'twas observ'd, there were but few,
 Of either Sex, among the Crew,
 Whom she or her Assessors knew. }
 The Goddess soon began to see
 Things were not ripe for a Decree: 105
 And said, she must consult her Books,
 The Lovers *Fleta's*, *Bractons*, *Cokes*.⁶
 First, to a dapper Clerk she beckon'd,
 To turn to *Ovid*,⁷ Book the Second:
 She then referr'd them to a Place 110
 In *Virgil* (*vide Dido's Case*:)⁸
 As for *Tibullus's* Reports,⁹
 They never pass'd for Law in Courts;
 For *Cowley's* Briefs, and Pleas of *Waller*,¹
 Still their Authority was smaller. 115

5. Venus, the Roman goddess of love, emerged from the sea.

6. Venerable legal authorities. *Fleta*, a commentary on the English law; Henry de Bracton and Edward Coke were authors of works on English law.

7. Ovid, classical author of the *Amores* (Love Poems) and *Ars Amatoria* (Art of Love).

8. The story of Dido and Aeneas in Virgil's *Aeneid*.

9. Tibullus was a Roman elegiac poet whose books of poems in which women are celebrated have a love theme.

1. Abraham Cowley (1618–1667) and Edmund Waller (1606–1687), famous and influential seventeenth-century love poets.

THERE was on both Sides much to say:
 She'd hear the Cause another Day;
 And so she did, and then a Third:
 She heard it——there she kept her Word;
 But with Rejoinders and Replies, 120
 Long Bills, and Answers, stuff'd with Lies;
 Demur, Impar lance, and Essoign,²
 The Parties ne'er could Issue join:
 For Sixteen Years the Cause was spun,
 And then stood where it first begun 125

Now, gentle *Clio*,³ sing or say,
 What *Venus* meant by this Delay.
 The Goddess much perplex'd in Mind,
 To see her Empire thus declin'd;
 When first this grand Debate arose 130
 Above her Wisdom to compose,
 Conceiv'd a Project in her Head,
 To work her Ends; which if it sped,
 Wou'd shew the Merits of the Cause,
 Far better than consulting Laws. 135

IN a glad Hour, *Lucina*'s⁴ Aid
 Produc'd on Earth a wond'rous Maid,
 On whom the Queen of Love was bent
 To try a new Experiment:
 She threw her Law-books on the Shelf, 140
 And thus debated with herself.

SINCE Men alledge, they ne'er can find
 Those Beauties in a Female Mind,
 Which raise a Flame that will endure
 For ever, uncorrupt and pure; 145
 If 'tis with Reason they complain,
 This Infant shall restore my Reign.
 I'll search where ev'ry Virtue dwells,
 From Courts inclusive, down to Cells,
 What Preachers talk, or Sages write; 150
 These I will gather and unite;
 And represent them to Mankind
 Collected in that Infant's Mind.

THIS said, she plucks in Heav'n's high Bowers,
 A Sprig of *Amaranthine* Flow'rs;
 In Nectar thrice infuses Bays; 155
 Three Times refin'd in *Titan*'s Rays:
 Then calls the *Graces* to her Aid;

2. Legal terms for kinds of delay. Demur: a demurrer; Impar lance: petition for delay; Essoign: excuse for nonappearance in court.

3. The Muse of History.

4. Juno in her aspect as a goddess of childbirth.

And sprinkles thrice the new-born Maid;
 From whence the tender Skin assumes 160
 A Sweetness above all Perfumes:
 From whence a Cleanliness remains,
 Incapable of outward Stains;
 From whence that Decency of Mind,
 So lovely in the Female Kind; 165
 Where not one careless Thought intrudes,
 Less modest than the Speech of Prudes:
 Where never Blush was call'd in Aid;
 That spurious Virtue in a Maid;
 A Virtue but at second-hand; 170
 They blush because they understand.

THE *Graces* next wou'd act their Part,
 And shew'd but little of their Art;
 Their Work was half already done,
 The Child with native Beauty shone; 175
 The outward Form no Help requir'd:
 Each breathing on her thrice, inspir'd
 That gentle, soft, engaging Air,
 Which, in old Times, adorn'd the Fair:
 And said, "*Vanessa* be the Name, 180
 By which thou shalt be known to Fame:
Vanessa, by the Gods enroll'd:
 Her Name on Earth——shall not be told.

BUT still the Work was not compleat;
 When *Venus* thought on a Deceit: 185
 Drawn by her Doves, away she flies,
 And finds out *Palla*⁵ in the Skies:
 Dear *Pallas*, I have been this Morn
 To see a lovely Infant born:
 A Boy in yonder Isle below, 190
 So like my own, without his Bow:
 By Beauty could your Heart be won,
 You'd swear it is *Apollo*'s Son;
 But it shall ne'er be said, a Child
 So hopeful, has by me been spoil'd; 195
 I have enough besides to spare,
 And give him wholly to your Care.

WISDOM's above suspecting Wiles:
 The Queen of Learning gravely smiles;
 Down from *Olympus* comes with Joy, 200
 Mistakes *Vanessa* for a Boy;
 Then sows within her tender Mind
 Seeds long unknown to Womankind,

5. The Greek goddess Athena, identified by the Romans with Minerva, goddess of wisdom.

For manly Bosoms chiefly fit,
 The Seeds of Knowledge, Judgment, Wit. 205
 Her Soul was suddenly endu'd
 With Justice, Truth and Fortitude;
 With Honour, which no Breath can stain,
 Which Malice must attack in vain;
 With open Heart and bounteous Hand: 210
 But *Pallas* here was at a Stand;
 She knew in our degen'rate Days
 Bare Virtue could not live on Praise;
 That Meat must be with Money bought;
 She therefore, upon second Thought, 215
 Infus'd, yet as it were by Stealth,
 Some small Regard for State and Wealth:
 Of which, as she grew up, there stay'd
 A Tincture in the prudent Maid:
 She manag'd her Estate with Care, 220
 Yet lik'd three Footmen to her Chair.
 But lest he should neglect his Studies
 Like a young Heir, the thrifty Goddess
 (For fear young Master should be spoiled,)
 Wou'd use him like a younger Child; 225
 And, after long computing, found
 'Twou'd come to just Five Thousand Pound.

THE Queen of Love was pleas'd, and proud,
 To seë *Vanessa* thus endow'd;
 She doubted not but such a Dame 230
 Thro' ev'ry Breast would dart a Flame;
 That ev'ry rich and lordly Swain
 With Pride wou'd drag about her Chain;
 That Scholars should forsake their Books
 To study bright *Vanessa's* Looks: 235
 As she advanc'd, that Womankind
 Wou'd by her Model form their Mind;
 And all their Conduct wou'd be try'd
 By her, as an unerring Guide,
 Offending Daughters oft' would hear 240
Vanessa's Praise rung in their Ear:
 Miss *Betty*, when she does a Fault,
 Lets fall her Knife, or spills the Salt,
 Will thus be by her Mother chid;
 "'Tis what *Vanessa* never did. 245
 Thus by the Nymphs and Swains ador'd,
 My Pow'r shall be again restor'd,
 And happy Lovers bless my Reign——
 So *Venus* hop'd, but hop'd in vain.

FOR when in Time the *Martial Maid* 250
 Found out the Trick that *Venus* play'd,
 She shakes her Helm, she knits her Brows,

And fir'd with Indignation vows,
 To-morrow e'er the setting Sun,
 She'd all undo, that she had done. 255

BUT in the Poets we may find,
 A wholesome Law, Time out of Mind,
 Had been confirm'd by Fate's Decree;
 That Gods of whatsoe'er Degree,
 Resume not what themselves have giv'n, 260
 Or any Brother-God in Heav'n:
 Which keeps the Peace among the Gods,
 Or they must always be at Odds,
 And *Pallas*, if she broke the Laws,
 Must yield her Foe the stronger Cause; 265
 A Shame to one so much ador'd
 For Wisdom at *Jove's* Council-Board.
 Besides, she fear'd, the Queen of Love
 Wou'd meet with better Friends above:
 And tho' she must with Grief reflect, 270
 To see a mortal Virgin deck'd
 With Graces hitherto unknown
 To Female Breasts, except her own;
 Yet she wou'd act as best became
 A Goddess of unspotted Fame: 275
 She knew by Augury Divine,
Venus would fail in her Design:
 She studied well the Point, and found;
 Her Foes Conclusions were not sound,
 From Premisses erroneous brought, 280
 And therefore the Deductions nought;
 And must have contrary Effects
 To what her treach'rous Foe expects.

IN proper Season *Pallas* meets
 The Queen of Love, whom thus she greets: 285
 (For Gods we are by *Homer* told,
 Can in Celestial Language scold)
 Perfidious Goddess! but in vain
 You form'd this Project in your Brain;
 A Project for thy Talents fit, 290
 With much Deceit and little Wit:
 Thou hast, as thou shalt quickly see,
 Deceiv'd thy self, instead of me;
 For how can Heav'nly Wisdom prove
 An Instrument to earthly Love? 295
 Know'st thou not yet that Men commence
 Thy Votaries for want of Sense?
 Nor shall *Vanessa* be the Theme
 To manage thy abortive Scheme:
 She'll prove the greatest of thy Foes: 300
 And yet I scorn to interpose;

But using neither Skill, nor Force,
Leave all Things to their nat'ral Course.

THE Goddess thus pronounc'd her Doom:
When, lo! *Vanessa* in her Bloom, 305
Advanc'd like *Atalanta's*⁶ Star,
But rarely seen, and seen from far:
In a new World with Caution stept,
Watch'd all the Company she kept,
Well knowing from the Books she read 310
What dang'rous Paths young Virgins tread:
Would seldom at the Park appear,
Nor saw the Play-house twice a Year;
Yet not incurious, was inclin'd
To know the Converse of Mankind. 315

FIRST issu'd from Perfumers Shops,
A Croud of fashionable Fops;
They ask'd her, how she lik'd the Play,
Then told the Tattle of the Day;
A Duel fought last Night at Two, 320
About a Lady—you know who:
Mention'd a new *Italian*,⁷ come
Either from *Muscovy* or *Rome*;
Gave Hints of who and who's together;⁸
Then fell to talking of the Weather: 325
Last Night was so extremely fine,
The Ladies walk'd till after Nine.
Then in soft Voice and Speech absurd,
With Nonsense ev'ry second Word,
With Fustian from exploded⁹ Plays, 330
They celebrate her Beauty's Praise;
Run o'er their Cant of stupid Lyes,
And tell the Murders of her Eyes.

With silent Scorn *Vanessa* sat,
Scarce list'ning to their idle Chat; 335
Further than sometimes by a Frown,
When they grew pert, to pull them down.
At last she spitefully was bent
To try their Wisdom's full Extent;
And said, she valu'd nothing less 340
Than Titles, Figure, Shape, and Dress:
That Merit should be chiefly plac'd
In Judgment, Knowledge, Wit, and Taste;

6. In Greek mythology, *Atalanta* refused to marry any man who could not defeat her in a footrace; defeated suitors were killed.

7. A new singer for the Italian opera.

8. Cf. Rochester's "A Letter from Artemiza in the Towne to Chloe in the Countrey," ll. 34–35: "What change has happen'd of Intrigues, and whether / The Old ones last, and who, and who's together." *The Works of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*, ed. Harold Love (Oxford, 1999), p. 64.

9. Rejected; hissed off stage.

And these, she offer'd to dispute,
 Alone distinguish'd Man from Brute: 345
 That, present Times have no Pretence
 To Virtue, in the noblest Sense,
 By *Greeks* and *Romans* understood,
 To perish for our Country's Good.
 She nam'd the antient Heroes round, 350
 Explain'd for what they were renown'd:
 Then spoke with Censure, or Applause,
 Of foreign Customs, Rites, and Laws.
 Thro' Nature, and thro' Art she rang'd,
 And gracefully her Subject chang'd: 355
 In vain: Her Hearers had no Share
 In all she spoke, except to stare.
 Their Judgment was upon the Whole,
 —That Lady is the dullest Soul—
 Then tipt their Forehead in a Jeer, 360
 As who should say—she wants it here;
 She may be handsome, young and rich,
 But none will burn her for a Witch.

A PARTY next of glitt'ring Dames,
 From round the Purlieu of St. *James*,¹ 365
 Came early, out of pure good Will,
 To see the Girl in *Deshabille*,²
 Their Clamour 'lighting from their Chairs,
 Grew louder, all the Way up Stairs;
 At Entrance loudest; where they found 370
 The Room with Volumes litter'd round.
Vanessa held *Montaigne*,³ and read,
 Whilst Mrs. *Susan* comb'd her Head:
 They call'd for Tea and Chocolate,
 And fell into their usual Chat; 375
 Discoursing with important Face,
 On Ribbons, Fans, and Gloves and Lace;
 Shew'd Patterns just from *India* brought,
 And gravely ask'd her what she thought;
 Whether the Red or Green were best, 380
 And what they cost? *Vanessa* guess'd,
 As came into her Fancy first,
 Nam'd half the Rates, and lik'd the worst.
 To Scandal next—What aukward Thing
 Was that, last *Sunday* in the Ring?⁴ 385
 —I'm sorry *Mopsa* breaks so fast;
 I said her Face would never last.
Corinna with that youthful Air,
 Is thirty, and a Bit to spare:
 Her Fondness for a certain Earl 390

1. A fashionable area near St. James's Palace.

2. French idiom: negligent undress; only partly dressed.

3. A favorite French author of Swift's.

4. In Hyde Park, a fashionable place to promenade.

Began, when I was but a Girl.
Phyllis, who but a Month ago
 Was marry'd to the *Tunbridge*⁵ Beau,
 I saw coquetting t'other Night
 In publick with that odious Knight. 395

THEY rally'd next *Vanessa's* Dress;
 That Gown was made for old Queen *Bess*.
 Dear Madam, let me set your Head:
 Don't you intend to put on Red?
 A Petticoat without a Hoop! 400
 Sure, you are not asham'd to stoop;
 With handsome Garters at your Knees,
 No matter what a Fellow sees.

FILL'D with Disdain, with Rage inflam'd,
 Both of her self and Sex asham'd, 405
 The Nymph stood silent out of Spite,
 Nor would vouchsafe to set them right.
 Away the fair Detractors went,
 And gave, by Turns their Censures vent.
 She's not so handsome in my Eyes: 410
 For Wit, I wonder where it lies.
 She's fair and clean, and that's the most;
 But why proclaim her for a Toast?
 A Baby Face, no Life, nor Airs,
 But what she learnt at Country-Fairs; 415
 Scarce knows what Diff'rence is between
 Rich *Flanders* Lace, and Colberteen.
 I'll undertake my little *Nancy*
 In Flounces has a better Fancy.
 With all her Wit, I would not ask 420
 Her Judgment how to buy a Mask,
 We begg'd her but to patch her Face,
 She never hit one proper Place;
 Which ev'ry Girl at five Years old
 Can do as soon as she is told. 425
 I own, that out-of-fashion Stuff
 Becomes the *Creature* well enough.
 The Girl might pass, if we could get her
 To know the World a little better.
 (*To know the World*: A modern Phrase, 430
 For Visits, Ombre, Balls and Plays.)

THUS, to the World's perpetual Shame,
 The *Queen of Beauty* lost her Aim.
 Too late with Grief she understood,
Pallas had done more Harm than Good; 435
 For great Examples are but vain,

5. The wells at Tunbridge had long been a popular resort. See Rochester's "Tunbridge Wells" in *Works*, pp. 49–54.

Where Ignorance begets Disdain.
 Both Sexes arm'd with Guilt and Spite,
 Against *Vanessa's* Pow'r unite;
 To copy her, few Nymphs aspir'd; 440
 Her Virtues fewer Swains admir'd:
 So Stars beyond a certain Height
 Give Mortals neither Heat nor Light,

YET some of either Sex, endow'd,
 With Gifts superior to the Crowd, 445
 With Virtue, Knowledge, Taste and Wit
 She condescended to admit:
 With pleasing Arts she could reduce
 Mens Talents to their proper Use;
 And with Address each Genius held 450
 To that wherein it most excell'd;
 Thus making others Wisdom known,
 Could please them, and improve her own,
 A modest Youth said something new,
 She plac'd it in the strongest View. 455
 All humble Worth she strove to raise;
 Would not be prais'd, yet lov'd to praise.
 The Learned met with free Approach,
 Altho' they came not in a Coach.
 Some Clergy too she would allow, 460
 Nor quarrell'd at their aukward Bow:
 But this was for *Cadenus's* Sake;
 A Gownman of a diff'rent Make;
 Whom *Pallas* once *Vanessa's* Tutor,
 Had fix'd on for her Coadjutor. 465

BUT *Cupid*, full of Mischief longs
 To vindicate his Mother's Wrongs.
 On *Pallas* all Attempts are vain;
 One Way he knows to give her Pain;
 Vows, on *Vanessa's* Heart to take, 470
 Due Vengeance for her Patron's Sake.
 Those early Seeds by *Venus* sown,
 In spite of *Pallas*, now were grown;
 And *Cupid* hop'd they wou'd improve
 By Time, and ripen into Love. 475
 The Boy made use of all his Craft,
 In vain discharging many a Shaft,
 Pointed at Col'nels, Lords, and Beaux:
Cadenus warded off the Blows;
 For placing still some Book betwixt, 480
 The Darts were in the Cover fix'd;
 Or often blunted and recoil'd,
 On *Plutarch's* *Morals*⁶ struck, were spoil'd.

6. *Plutarch's Moralia.*

THE Queen of Wisdom cou'd foresee,
 But not prevent the Fates Decree: 485
 And human Caution tries in vain
 To break that Adamantine Chain.
Vanessa, tho' by *Pallas* taught,
 By *Love* invulnerable thought,
 Searching in Books for Wisdom's Aid, 490
 Was, in the very Search, betray'd.

CUPID, tho' all his Darts were lost,
 Yet still resolv'd to spare no Cost;
 He could not answer to his Fame
 The Triumphs of that stubborn Dame; 495
 A Nymph so hard to be subdu'd,
 Who neither was Coquet nor Prude.
 I find, said he, she wants a Doctor,
 Both to adore her, and instruct her;
 I'll give her what she most admires: 500
 Among those venerable Sires.
Cadenus is a Subject fit,
 Grown old in Politicks and Wit;
 Caress'd by Ministers of State,
 Of half Mankind the Dread and Hate. 505
 Whate'er Vexations Love attend,
 She need no Rivals apprehend:
 Her Sex with universal Voice,
 Must laugh at her capricious Choice.

CADENUS many Things had writ; 510
Vanessa much esteem'd his Wit,
 And call'd for his Poetick Works;
 Mean time the Boy in secret Lurks,
 And while the Book was in her Hand,
 The Urchin from his private Stand 515
 Took Aim, and shot with all his Strength
 A Dart of such prodigious Length,
 It pierc'd the feeble Volume thro',
 And deep transfix'd her Bosom too.
 Some Lines more moving than the rest, 520
 Stuck to the Point that pierc'd her Breast;
 And born directly to her Heart,
 With Pains unknown encreas'd the Smart.

VANESSA, not in Years a Score,
 Dreams of a Gown of forty-four;⁷ 525
 Imaginary Charms can find,
 In Eyes with Reading almost blind:
Cadenus now no more appears

7. Swift was some twenty years older than Vanessa. Swift's relations with women often took on this tutor-pupil character.

Declin'd in Health, advanc'd in Years:
 She fancies Musick in his Tongue, 530
 Nor further looks, but thinks him young.
 What Mariner is not afraid
 To venture in a Ship decay'd?
 What Planter will attempt to yoke
 A Sapling with a falling Oak? 535
 As Years increase, she brighter shines,
Cadenus with each Day declines,
 And he must fall a Prey to Time,
 While she continues in her Prime.

CADENUS, common Forms apart, 540
 In every Scene had kept his Heart;
 Had sigh'd and languish'd, vow'd and writ,
 For Pastime, or to shew his Wit:
 But Books, and Time, and State Affairs,
 Had spoil'd his fashionable Airs; 545
 He now cou'd praise, esteem, approve,
 But understood not what was Love:
 His Conduct might have made him styl'd
 A Father, and the Nymph his Child.
 That innocent Delight he took 550
 To see the Virgin mind her Book,
 Was but the Master's secret Joy
 In School to hear the finest Boy.
 Her Knowledge with her Fancy grew;
 She hourly press'd for something new: 555
Ideas came into her Mind
 So fast, his Lessons lagg'd behind:
 She reason'd, without plodding long;
 Nor ever gave her Judgment wrong.
 But now a sudden Change was wrought, 560
 She minds no longer what he taught.
Cadenus was amaz'd to find
 Such Marks of a distracted Mind;
 For tho' she seem'd to listen more
 To all he spoke, than e'er before; 565
 He found her Thoughts would absent range,
 Yet guess'd not whence could spring the Change.
 And first, he modestly conjectures
 His Pupil might be tir'd with Lectures;
 Which help'd to mortify his Pride, 570
 Yet gave him not the Heart to chide:
 But in a mild dejected Strain,
 At last he ventur'd to complain:
 Said, she should be no longer teiz'd;
 Might have her Freedom when she pleas'd; 575
 Was now convinc'd he acted wrong,
 To hide her from the World so long;
 And in dull Studies to engage,

One of her tender Sex and Age:
 That ev'ry Nymph with Envy own'd, 580
 How she might shine in the *Grand-Monde*:
 And ev'ry Shepherd was undone
 To see her cloister'd like a Nun.
 This was a visionary Scheme,
 He wak'd and found it but a Dream; 585
 A Project far above his Skill,
 For Nature must be Nature still.
 If he were bolder than became
 A Scholar to a courtly Dame,
 She might excuse a Man of Letters; 590
 Thus Tutors often treat their Betters.
 And since his Talk offensive grew,
 He came to take his last Adieu.

VANESSA, fill'd with just Disdain,
 Wou'd still her Dignity maintain; 595
 Instructed from her early Years
 To scorn the Art of Female Tears.

HAD he employ'd his Time so long
 To teach her what was Right and Wrong,
 Yet cou'd such Notions entertain 600
 That all his Lectures were in vain?
 She own'd the wand'ring of her Thoughts;
 But he must answer for her Faults.
 She well remember'd to her Cost,
 That all his Lessons were not lost. 605
 Two Maxims she could still produce,
 And sad Experience taught their Use:
 That Virtue, pleas'd by being shown,
 Knows nothing which it dare not own;
 Can make us, without fear, disclose 610
 Our inmost Secrets to our Foes:
 That common Forms were not design'd
 Directors to a noble Mind.
 Now, said the Nymph, to let you see
 My Actions with your Rules agree, 615
 That I can vulgar Forms despise,
 And have no Secrets to disguise:
 I knew by what you said and writ,
 How dang'rous Things were Men of Wit;
 You caution'd me against their Charms, 620
 But never gave me equal Arms:
 Your Lessons found the weakest Part,
 Aim'd at the Head, but reach'd the Heart.

CADENUS felt within him rise
 Shame, Disappointment, Guilt, Surprise. 625
 He knew not how to reconcile

Such Language, with her usual Style:
 And yet her Words were so exprest,
 He cou'd not hope she spoke in jest.
 His Thoughts had wholly been confin'd 630
 To form and cultivate her Mind.
 He hardly knew, 'till he was told,
 Whether the Nymph were young or old:
 Had met her in a publick Place,
 Without distinguishing her Face. 635
 Much less could his declining Age,
Vanessa's earliest Thoughts engage:
 And if her Youth Indifference met,
 His Person must Contempt beget.
 Or, grant her Passion be sincere, 640
 How shall his Innocence be clear?
 Appearances were all so strong,
 The World must think him in the Wrong;
 Wou'd say, he made a treach'rous Use
 Of Wit, to flatter and seduce: 645
 The Town wou'd swear he had betray'd,
 By Magick Spells, the harmless Maid;
 And ev'ry Beau wou'd have his Jokes,
 That Scholars were like other Folks:
 That when Platonick Flights are over, 650
 The Tutor turns a mortal Lover:
 So tender of the Young and Fair?
 It shew'd a true paternal Care:
 Five Thousand Guineas in her Purse.
 The Doctor might have fancy'd worse. 655

HARDLY at length he Silence broke,
 And faulter'd ev'ry Word he spoke:
 Interpreting her Complaisance,⁸
 Just as a Man *sans Consequence*.⁹
 She railly'd¹ well, he always knew; 660
 Her Manner now was something new;
 And what she spoke was in an Air,
 As serious as a Tragick Play'r.
 But those, who aim at Ridicule,
 Shou'd fix upon some certain Rule; 665
 Which fairly hints they are in jest,
 Else he must alter his Protest:
 For, let a Man be ne'er so wise,
 He may be caught with sober Lies;
 A Science, which he never taught, 670
 And, to be free, was dearly bought:

8. Courtesy.

9. Of no consequence (i.e. out of contention as a suitor).

1. Good-humored ridicule.

For, take it in its proper Light,
'Tis just what Coxcombs call, *a Bite*.²

BUT, not to dwell on Things minute;
Vanessa finish'd the Dispute: 675
Brought weighty Arguments to prove
That Reason was her Guide in Love.
She thought he had himself describ'd,
His Doctrines when she first imbib'd;
What he had planted, now was grown; 680
His Virtues she might call her own;
As he approves, as he dislikes,
Love or Contempt, her Fancy strikes.
Self Love, in Nature rooted fast,
Attends us first, and leaves us last: 685
Why she likes him, admire not at her,
She loves her self, and that's the Matter.
How was her Tutor wont to praise
The Genius's of ancient Days!
(Those Authors he so oft had nam'd 690
For Learning, Wit, and Wisdom fam'd;)
Was struck with Love, Esteem and Awe,
For Persons whom he never saw.
Suppose *Cadenus* flourish'd then,
He must adore such God-like Men.³ 695
If one short Volume could comprise
All that was witty, learn'd, and wise,
How wou'd it be esteem'd, and read,
Altho' the Writer long were dead?
If such an Author were alive, 700
How all would for his Friendship strive;
And come in Crowds to see his Face:
And this she takes to be her Case:
Cadenus answer'd ev'ry End,
The Book, the Author, and the Friend. 705
The utmost her Desires will reach,
Is but to learn what he can teach;
His Converse, is a System, fit
Alone to fill up all her Wit;
While ev'ry Passion of her Mind 710
In him is center'd and confin'd.

LOVE can with Speech inspire a Mute;
And taught *Vanessa* to dispute.

2. A deception or hoax; a lie told in a serious manner, designed as a humorous trick or practical joke. Swift describes this fashionable mode of humor to the Rev. William Tisdall in a letter of December 16, 1703: "I'll teach you a way to outwit Mrs. Johnson: it is a new-fashioned way of being witty, and they call it a bite. You must ask a bantering question, or tell some damned lye in a serious manner, and then she will answer or speak as if you were in earnest: then cry you, Madam, there's a bite" (CW I:148).
3. Another echo of Rochester; cf. "A Satyre against Reason and Mankind," l. 220: "If upon Earth there dwell such God-like men" (*Works*, p. 63).

This Topick, never touch'd before,
 Display'd her Eloquence the more: 715
 Her Knowledge, with such Pains acquir'd,
 By this new Passion grew inspir'd:
 Thro' this she made all Objects pass,
 Which gave a Tincture o'er the Mass:
 As Rivers, tho' they bend and twine, 720
 Still to the Sea their Course incline:
 Or as Philosophers, who find
 Some fav'rite System to their Mind;
 In ev'ry Point to make it fit,
 Will force all Nature to submit. 725

CADENUS, who could ne'er suspect
 His Lessons would have such Effect,
 Or be so artfully apply'd;
 Insensibly came on her Side:
 It was an unforeseen Event, 730
 Things took a Turn he never meant.
 Whoe'er excels in what we prize,
 Appears a Hero to our Eyes;
 Each Girl when pleas'd with what is taught,
 Will have the Teacher in her Thought: 735
 When Miss delights in her Spinnet,
 A Fidler may a Fortune get:
 A Blockhead with melodious Voice
 In Boarding-Schools can have his Choice:
 And oft' the Dancing-Master's Art 740
 Climbs from the Toe to touch the Heart.
 In Learning let a Nymph delight,
 The Pedant gets a Mistress by't.
Cadenus, to his Grief and Shame,
 Cou'd scarce oppose *Vanessa's* Flame; 745
 And tho' her Arguments were strong,
 At least could hardly wish them wrong.
 Howe'er it came, he could not tell,
 But sure she never talk'd so well.
 His Pride began to interpose; 750
 Preferr'd before a Crowd of Beaux:
 So bright a Nymph to come unsought,
 Such Wonder by his Merit wrought:
 'Tis Merit must with her prevail,
 He never knew her Judgment fail: 755
 She noted all she ever read,
 And had a most discerning Head,

'Tis an old Maxim in the Schools,
 That Flattery's the Food of Fools;
 Yet now and then your Men of Wit 760
 Will condescend to take a Bit.
 So when *Cadenus* could not hide,

He chose to justify his Pride;
 Constr'ing the Passion she had shown,
 Much to her Praise, more to his own. 765
 Nature in him had Merit plac'd;
 In her, a most judicious Taste.
 Love, hitherto a transient Guest,
 Ne'er held Possession of his Breast;
 So, long attending at the Gate, 770
 Disdain'd to enter in so late.
Love, why do we one Passion call?
 When 'tis a Compound of them all;
 Where hot and cold, where sharp and sweet,
 In all their Equipages⁴ meet: 775
 Where Pleasures mix'd with Pains appear,
 Sorrow with Joy, and Hope with Fear:
 Wherein his Dignity and Age
 Forbid *Cadenus* to engage:
 But Friendship in its greatest Height, 780
 A constant, rational Delight,
 On Virtue's Basis fix'd to last,
 When Love's Allurements long are past;
 Which gently warms, but cannot burn;
 He gladly offers in return: 785
 His want of Passion will redeem,
 With Gratitude, Respect, Esteem:
 With that Devotion we bestow,
 When Goddesses appear below.

WHILE thus *Cadenus* entertains 790
Vanessa in exalted Strains,
 The Nymph, in sober Words, intreats
 A Truce with all sublime Conceits:
 For why such Raptures, Flights, and Fancies,
 To her, who durst not read Romances; 795
 In lofty Style to make Replies,
 Which he had taught her to despise.
 But when her Tutor will affect
 Devotion, Duty, and Respect,
 He fairly abdicates his Throne; 800
 The Government is now her own:
 He has a Forfeiture incurr'd:
 She vows to take him at his Word;
 And hopes he will not think it strange,
 If both shou'd now their Stations change. 805
 The Nymph will have her Turn, to be
 The Tutor; and the Pupil, he:
 Tho' she already can discern,
 Her Scholar is not apt to learn;

4. In all their array and order.

Or wants Capacity to reach 810
 The Science she designs to teach:
 Wherein his Genius was below
 The Skill of ev'ry common Beau;
 Who, tho' he cannot spell, is wise
 Enough to read a Lady's Eyes; 815
 And will each accidental Glance
 Interpret for a kind Advance.

BUT what Success *Vanessa* met,
 Is to the World a Secret yet:
 Whether the Nymph, to please her Swain, 820
 Talks in a high romantick Strain;
 Or whether he at last descends
 To act with less Seraphick Ends;
 Or, to compound the Business, whether
 They temper Love and Books together; 825
 Must never to Mankind be told,
 Nor shall the conscious Muse unfold,

MEAN time, the mournful *Queen of Love*
 Led but a weary Life above.
 She ventures now to leave the Skies, 830
 Grown by *Vanessa's* Conduct wise:
 For tho' by one perverse Event
Pallas had cross'd her first Intent;
 Tho' her Design was not obtain'd,
 Yet had she much Experience gain'd; 835
 And by the Project vainly try'd,
 Cou'd better now the *Cause* decide.

SHE gave due Notice, that both Parties,
 **Coram Regina prox' die Martis*,
 Should at their Peril, without fail, 840
Come and appear, and save their Bail.
 All met, and Silence thrice proclaim'd,
 One Lawyer to each Side was nam'd.
 The Judge discover'd in her Face,
 Resentments for her late Disgrace; 845
 And, full of Anger, Shame, and Grief,
 Directed them to mind their Brief;
 Nor spend their Time to shew their Reading;
 She'd have a summary Proceeding.
 She gather'd, under ev'ry Head, 850
 The Sum of what each Lawyer said;
 Gave her own Reasons last; and then
 Decreed the Cause against the *Men*.
 BUT, in a weighty Case like this,

* Before the Queen on *Tuesday* next.

To shew she did not judge amiss, 855
 Which evil Tongues might else report:
 She made a Speech in open Court;
 Wherein she grievously complains,
 "How she was cheated by the Swains:
 On whose Petition, (humbly shewing 860
 That Women were not worth the wooing;
 And that unless the Sex would mend,
 The Race of Lovers soon must end:)
 "She was at Lord knows what Expence,
 To form a Nymph of Wit and Sense; 865
 A Model for her Sex design'd;
 Who never cou'd one Lover find.
 She saw her Favour was misplac'd;
 The Fellows had a wretched Taste;
 She needs must tell them to their Face, 870
 They were a stupid, senseless Race:
 And were she to begin agen,
 She'd study to reform the *Men*;
 Or add some Grains of Folly more
 To *Women* than they had before, 875
 To put them on an equal Foot;
 And this, or nothing else, wou'd do't.
 This might their mutual Fancy strike,
 Since ev'ry Being loves its *Like*.

BUT now, repenting what was done, 880
 She left all Business to her Son:
 She puts the World in his Possession,
 And let him use it at Discretion."

THE Cry'r was order'd to dismiss
 The Court; who made his last O *yes!* 885
 The Goddess wou'd no longer wait;
 But rising from her Chair of State,
 Left all below at Six and Sev'n;
 Harness'd her Doves, and flew to Heav'n.